

COSFORD RURAL DISTRICT, 1915.

In the Administrative County of West Suffolk.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

On the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Cosford Rural District of the Cosford Union, during the twelve months ending the 31st December, 1915.

(TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COSFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL.)

Population (1901) 11618, (1911) 11808, (Males 6035, Females 5773).

Area 48,572 acres. Number of persons per acre, 0.2.

Number of Inhabited Houses, 2,814. Number of Persons per Inhabited House, 4.1.

I. BIRTHS. There were 209 births registered in, and belonging to, the District during the year (108 males, and 101 females), making a birth-rate of 17.6 per thousand of the population. The births and birth-rates for the past five years were as follows:—

	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
Births	269	224	217	219	209
Birth-rates.....	22.7	18.9	18.4	18.5	17.6

II. DEATHS. The number of deaths from all causes, at all ages, belonging to the District, was 178 (86 males and 92 females) making a death-rate of 15.0 per thousand of the population. The deaths and death-rates during the past five years were:—

	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
Deaths	151	154	147	168	178
Death-rates ...	12.7	13.0	12.4	14.2	15.0

Infantile Mortality. The infantile mortality was unusually high for this District. There were 23 deaths amongst infants under one year of age, making a death-rate of 110.0 on the registered births. Of these 15 were due to atrophy, debility and marasmus, or premature birth, and 5 to pneumonia. The proportion of deaths under one year to births in the last five years was:—

1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
74.3	58.0	55.0	91.3	110.0

Notification of Births Act (1907). This Act which was until last year “adoptive,” and had not been adopted in this District, has, since the 1st September, 1915, become compulsory. From the 1st of September to the 31st December, 1915, 44 births were notified in the District. There were 63 births registered in the four months, which seems to indicate that some births have not been notified. Arrangements have not yet been completed for all cases to be visited by the Health Visitor.

Infectious Diseases. There were 22 deaths from infectious diseases during the year, including all forms of tuberculosis, making a rate of 1.8 per thousand. The deaths and death-rates from infectious diseases during the past five years were as follows:—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria.	Puerperal Fever.	Diarrhoea. Dysentery.	Typhoid Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Epidemic Influenza.	Erysipelas.	Pulmonary Tuberculosis.	Other Tuberculous Diseases.	Totals.	Death-rates.
1911	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	1	—	14	3	24	2.0
1912	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	8	4	14	1.1
1913	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	8	4	15	1.3
1914	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	4	3	—	6	1	17	1.4
1915	—	2	—	—	1	—	4	—	3	—	8	4	22	1.8

Deaths from all other causes were 156, or 13.2 per thousand of the population. The deaths in this District caused by the principal diseases, and death-rates during the past five years were:—

	Bronchitis Pleurisy. Pneumonia.	Heart Disease.	Injury.	Cancer.	Other Diseases.	Totals.	Death-rates.
1911.....	11	15	2	12	91	144	12.1
1912.....	10	13	8	14	99	144	12.1
1913.....	15	2	9	14	91	131	11.0
1914.....	21	11	9	12	98	151	12.7
1915.....	27	23	6	9	91	156	13.2

III. THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT. The total number of infectious diseases notified under the Act, in this District, during 1915 was 42, or 3.5 per thousand of the population. Eleven of these were notified under the Tuberculosis regulations, which were put in force in 1912. The cases during the past five years were:—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Continued Fever.	Diphtheria & Memb. Croup.	Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Polio-myelitis	Tuberculosis. (all forms)	Total.	Per Thousand of Population.
1911	—	8	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	11	.9
1912	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	13	16	1.3
1913	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	18	21	1.7
1914	—	8	—	3	—	—	1	—	17	29	2.4
1915	—	21	—	4	—	—	5	1	11	42	3.5

Smallpox. There were no cases of smallpox.

Scarlet Fever. There were 21 cases during the year. Of these, three were at Brettenham, one at Hitcham, one at Lindsey, two at Monk's Eleigh, six at Lavenham, one at Polstead, six at Wattisham, and one in the Workhouse. The disease was introduced both at Brettenham and Wattisham by soldiers who had been discharged from Military Hospitals after suffering from scarlet fever. The case at Semer House was sent in from the Children's Home at Hadleigh. The cases at Lavenham were all contracted from the unrecognised case of a child who had been attending school whilst ill with so mild a form of the disease that he had not received medical attendance. The Hitcham case was contracted from Brettenham. I was unable to trace the source of infection in the cases at Monk's Eleigh, Lindsey, and Polstead.

Diphtheria. There were 4 cases during the year. Two at Lavenham, one at Polstead, and one at Wattisham. At Wattisham the sanitary surroundings of the cottage were not satisfactory. The cesspool was so placed that any overflow would drain into a pond near the house. I was unable to trace the source of infection either at Lavenham or Polstead.

Typhoid Fever. None.

Erysipelas. There were 5 cases, all in different villages. Bildeston one, Polstead one, Chelsworth one, Edwardstone one and Brettenham one.

Tuberculosis. There were 11 cases notified during the year (all pulmonary), shewing a satisfactory decrease compared with 1914 and 1913.

Anthrax. None.

Poliomyelitis. One case was notified at Bildeston.

Plague. None. There has been no organised campaign against rats as in previous years.

In all cases of infectious diseases notified the houses are visited at once and the patient isolated as far as possible. It is very rarely however that a room is available in these cottages for isolation, and even where a bedroom can be set apart for the purpose, as a rule it has no fireplace, so that when the patient is well enough to get up, the difficulties are only increased, especially in cold weather. It is impossible to keep a convalescent sitting in a cold room without a fire.

As I have before pointed out, the only satisfactory method of dealing with these cases is by removal to an Isolation Hospital. At the end of the illness a thorough disinfection is carried out by the Inspector of Nuisances. Printed notices are issued to the head of the house in each case, drawing attention to the penalties incurred by exposure of infected persons or articles.

IV. WATER SUPPLY. The villages in the District which depend mainly on ponds for their water supply are:—Aldham, Brettenham, Kettlebaston, Milden, Naughton, Nedging, Thorpe Morieux, Preston, and Wattisham. Those villages possessing public wells are:—Bildeston, Cockfield, Elmsett, Groton, Hitcham, Lavenham, Lindsey, Monk's Eleigh, Polstead, Whatfield and Wattisham.

Hitcham. The wind-driven pump at Hitcham broke down for a time in the autumn, but has been put in order again, and is now working satisfactorily.

Whatfield. The scheme for the improvement of the Water Supply of Watfield, which was given in detail in my 1913 report, was completed in April (1915) and is proving satisfactory. At first there was a disagreeable taste from the anti-corrosive dressing applied to the pipes, but this would disappear after a time. There has been a good supply of water from this well all the year.

Bildeston. Nothing has been done to improve the character of the water in the Public Well at Bildeston, which as has before been reported, is not satisfactory.

Thorpe Morieux. Negotiations have been commenced for acquiring a piece of land with a view to sinking a well at Thorpe Green, as a Public Water Supply.

Water Analysis. I have analysed 2 samples of drinking water during the year—both satisfactory.

V. SEWERAGE. There has been no alteration in the sewerage of the District during the year. The only three villages that possess public sewers are Boxford, Bildeston, and Lavenham, and these all discharge into the neighbouring streams.

Scavenging. Public Scavenging is still carried out only at Lavenham. It is very satisfactorily done, at a cost of about £38 per annum. It would be a great advantage if the same system were adopted in the other large villages in the District, particularly in Boxford and Bildeston. The question of its adoption in Bildeston has been before the Council, but the further consideration of the scheme has been postponed for six months.

Closet Accommodation. The approximate numbers are—W.C's. 62, P.C's. 703, Privies 1835. Twenty-five privies have been converted into P.C's. during the year, and six new P.C's. built.

VI. HOUSES AND COTTAGES. Fifty-five cottages were repaired and cleaned during the year, and six new cottages were erected. Two by private enterprise, and four at Whatfield, by the Local Authority, were completed in April. Four cases of overcrowding at Whatfield, and one at Kersey Tye have been abated. Overcrowding still exists at Kettlebaston and Elmsett, but is impossible to deal with until more housing accommodation is provided.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING ACT, 1909. The inspection of the various parishes in the District under the 'Housing, Town Planning Act,' has had to be abandoned until after the War for two reasons. First it was found impossible to get the required repairs and improvements carried out, on account of the shortage of labour due to enlistment, and secondly because our Inspector under the Act, Mr. Bright, felt it his duty to offer himself for military service, and, with the consent of the Council, joined His Majesty's forces early in November.

During the year the parish of Polstead and part of Layham were inspected—the number of houses inspected being 159. Six of these were found unfit. Two closing orders were made. Fifty-five defects were remedied without closing orders.

The results of the inspection of Polstead parish were as follows:—

Number of dwelling houses inspected.	Number of houses with sealed windows.	Houses with windowless rooms.	Houses with less than three rooms.	Houses with less than three bedrooms.	Unoccupied houses.	Overcrowded houses.
135	39	1	6	99	3	2

One of the houses reported unoccupied has since been occupied. Another was a farm cottage, and therefore not available. One cottage in Potash Lane was in a ruinous condition, and unfit for human habitation. Many of the houses in this parish have very damp walls, owing to the porous quality of the bricks. I would also draw the attention of the Council to the very large proportion of houses that have less than three bedrooms. The cases of overcrowding are impossible to deal with until more houses are erected.

The parishes so far inspected are:—Aldham, Elmsett, Milden, Naughton, Nedging, and Whatfield (in 1911). Semer, Preston, Wattisham, Kettlebaston, Kersey, Lindsey and Chelsworth (in 1912). Monk's Eleigh and Cockfield (in 1913). Edwardstone, Thorpe Morieux and Brent Eleigh (in 1914). Polstead and part of Layham (in 1915). There still remain to be inspected Boxford, Groton, Lavenham, Bildeston, Hitcham, Hadleigh Hamlet, and part of Layham.

There was a L.G.B. enquiry at Elmsett on July 5th with regard to the Cottages the Council were proposing to erect. It was suggested that the plans submitted by the Council should be altered to reduce the expenditure. Further consideration of this matter has been postponed until after the War.

In Mr. Bright's absence, Mr. Fairchild has been appointed as temporary Inspector of Nuisances for the District.

VII. FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT. The factory and workshops were all inspected during the year. There are 28 bakehouses in the District, all above ground, and these are all visited half-yearly. All are in good condition. The outworkers' premises at Lavenham, Boxford, and Polstead were all inspected during the year and found to be satisfactory. Twenty-five of these are workers in horsehair, and 11 are engaged in tailoring. Sect. 22 of the Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1890, has not been adopted in the District.

VIII. CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACT. Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order. There are no milkshops in the District. There are 21 registered cowkeepers in the District, and 21 dairies and cowsheds. All have been inspected twice during the year, and their general condition was fairly satisfactory. The cows are habitually turned out to graze. The milk supply is insufficient in nearly all the villages. Some of the larger dairies send milk away out of the district.

IX. SLAUGHTER HOUSES. There are 15 registered Slaughter Houses in the District. All private, and in good condition. Thirty-eight visits of inspection were paid during the year.

Knacker's Premises. There is one at Monk's Eleigh. This was inspected, and found to be in very fair condition.

X. ISOLATION HOSPITAL. None.

XI. SCHOOLS. The Public Elementary Schools were all inspected during the year. Measles was very prevalent in the District in the months of May, June, July and August, and the following schools were closed for a time on that account;—Lavenham, Kersey, Lindsey, Whatfield, Preston, Polstead, Brent Eleigh, and Brettenham. Later on the Lavenham Schools were again closed on account of an outbreak of Scarlet Fever.

XII. SANITARY INSPECTIONS. The Inspector of Nuisances reports that the following notices have been served and nuisances abated:—

Privies and cesspools repaired and new sanitary pails provided	-	-	70
Privies converted into pails and new pail closets built	-	-	25
New privies built	-	-	5
Privy cesspools emptied and pails in cleaner state	-	-	63
Ditches and bumby holes cleaned out and altered and yards cleaned up	-	-	17
Drains and sinks made, repaired and trapped	-	-	41
Cottages cleansed	-	-	4
Pig styes cleaned out and refuse heaps removed	-	-	13
Workshops cleaned and repaired	-	-	4
Animals kept so as to be a nuisance	-	-	2
Ponds cleaned out, wells made, pumps repaired, etc.	-	-	3
Water spouts, etc., repaired and provided	-	-	4
Overcrowding abated	-	-	7
Cottages repaired	-	-	33
			<hr/>
			291

XIII. SPECIAL REPORTS. None.

The Adoptive Acts in force in the District are:—Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1890. (Applicable Provisions by Section 50.) Infectious Disease Prevention Act, 1890. Both these were adopted in 1902. Section 160 of the P.H.A. 1875 as incorporate, or relate to the incorporation of provisions of Section 74 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, is in force within the parishes of Bildeston, Boxford, Lavenham, and Monk's Eleigh.

Building Bye-laws have been adopted during the year.

The tabular statements of sickness and mortality in the District, according to the forms supplied by the Local Government Board, are appended to this Report.

ALFRED THOMPSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.—Cosford Rural District.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1915 and previous years.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births.			Total deaths registered in the district		Transferable deaths.		Nett deaths belonging to the district.			
		Uncorrected number.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	Of non-residents registered in the district	Of Residents not registered in the district.	Under 1 year of age.		At all Ages.	
			Number.	Rates.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 nett births.	Number.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1910	11808	263	...	22.6	144	12.3	...	...	21	79.8	144	12.3
1911	"	269	...	22.7	151	12.7	...	...	20	74.3	153	12.9
1912	"	224	226	19.1	146	12.3	...	8	13	58.0	154	13.0
1913	"	218	217	18.3	139	11.7	2	10	12	55.0	147	12.4
1914	"	219	217	18.3	165	13.9	3	6	20	91.3	168	14.2
1915	11808	209	209	17.6	171	14.4	1	8	23	110.0	178	15.0

Area of District in acres (land and inland water) ... 48572

At Census in 1911—

Total population at all ages 11808
 Number of inhabited houses 2814
 Average number of persons per house 4.1

TABLE II.—Cosford Rural District.

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1915.

Notifiable Disease.	Cases notified in Whole District.							
	At all ages.	At ages—years.						
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Small-pox ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cholera (C) Plague (P) ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria (including membranous croup) ...	4	...	...	2	2	...	...	...
Erysipelas ...	5	...	1	...	...	2	2	...
Scarlet Fever ...	21	...	2	11	3	3	2	...
Typhus Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Relapsing Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Continued Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cerebro-spinal-Meningitis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Polio-myelitis ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	11	...	...	1	4	5	1	...
Other forms of Tuberculosis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	42	...	3	14	10	10	5	...

Total cases removed to Hospital ... None.

Isolation Hospitals, Sanatoria, &c. ... None.

Table III.—Cosford Rural District.

Causes of, and Ages at Death during the year 1915.

Cause of Death.		Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District.										Total Deaths whether of "Resi- dents" or "Non- Residents" in Institutions in the District.
		All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 & under 2 years.	2 & under 5 years.	5 & under 15 years.	15 & under 25 years.	25 & under 45 years.	45 & under 65 years.	65 and upwards.		
All causes	Certified Uncertified	175 3	23	9	3	4	8	11	35 2	82 1	16	
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Small-pox	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles	...	4	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever	...	2	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria and Croup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Influenza	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	...	8	...	...	...	...	4	1	3	...	1
Tuberculous Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	4	...	...	...	...	1	2	1	...	...
Cancer malignant disease	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	1	6	2	...
Rheumatic Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Organic Heart Disease	...	23	...	...	...	...	...	2	6	15	...
Bronchitis	...	13	...	3	...	...	...	...	2	8	...
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	14	5	3	...	1	...	2	1	2	1	
Other diseases of Res- piratory organs	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diarrhoea and Enteritis	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Appendicitis & Typhlitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Alcoholism	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nephritis and Bright's disease	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	5	1
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
Other accidents and diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Congenital Debility & Malformation, includ- ing Premature Birth	...	15	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Violent Deaths,exclud- ing Suicide	...	4	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	2	...
Suicide	...	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...
Other Defined Diseases	...	36	2	1	1	...	..	1	11	20	11
Diseases ill-defined or unknown	...	30	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	27	...
Total	...	178	23	9	3	4	8	11	37	83	16	

TABLE IV.—Cosford Rural District.

Infant Mortality, 1915.

Nett deaths from stated causes at various ages under One year of Age.

Cause of Death.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	Total under 1 Month.	1-3 Months.	3-6 Months.	6-9 Months.	9-12 Months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
All causes :										
{ Certified ..	5	2	1	4	12	5	1	3	2	23
{ Uncertified
Small-pox
Chicken-pox
Measles
Scarlet fever
Whooping-Cough
Diphtheria and Croup
Erysipelas
Tuberculous Meningitis
Abdominal Tuberculosis (b)
Other Tuberculous Diseases
Meningitis (not Tuberculous)
Convulsions
Laryngitis
Bronchitis
Pneumonia (all forms)	3	2	5
Diarrhoea	1	...	...	...	1
Enteritis
Gastritis
Syphilis
Rickets
Suffocation, overlying
Injury at birth
Atelectasis
Congenital Malformations (c)
Premature birth
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus ...	5	2	1	3	11	3	1	...	...	15
Other Causes	1	1	1	...	...	...	2
Totals ..	5	2	1	4	12	5	1	3	2	23

Nett Births in the year { legitimate... 200
illegitimate ... 9Nett Deaths in the year of { legitimate infants ... 20
illegitimate infants 3